

REMARKS

Applicant has received and carefully studied the restriction requirement dated March 17, 2006. Claims 1-20 are pending. Applicant assumes that the Office Action meant to say that Group I includes claim 1-8 instead of claims 1-18.

Applicant now provisionally elects Group I (claims 1-8) without prejudice, for further prosecution. Applicant furthermore provisionally elects the species shown in figures 2a, 4a, and 4b which illustrate the subject matter of at least independent claims 1 and 5 and claims dependent therefrom.

Regarding Group III, Applicant respectfully *traverses* the restriction of Group III (i.e. claims 12-15). Claims 12-15 all depend from claim 1 of Group I. Claims 12-15 all refer to claim 1 *after* the respective preambles. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the subject matter of claims 12-15 *as claimed* cannot possibly be used in a materially different process. See MPEP § 806.05(h) (first paragraph). Alternatively or additionally, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 12-15 and new claim 35 are each “linking claims.” See MPEP § 806.05(e) (last three paragraphs); MPEP § 809.03(C). Applicant also respectfully notes that it is acceptable for a product or apparatus claim to make reference to limitations in a method claim, and to depend from that method claim. See MPEP § 2173.05(f); 2173.05(p)(I).

Regarding Group II, those claims (i.e. claims 9-11) are now cancelled without prejudice.

Regarding Group IV, claim 18 closely corresponds to claim 9, and therefore claim 18 is now cancelled without prejudice. However, claims 16, 17, 19, and 20 are all very closely related to claim 5 of Group I, and Applicant respectfully *traverses* the restriction of claims 16, 17, 19, and 20 for the same basic reasons that Applicant traversed the restriction of Group III, and/or because these are linking claims.

New Claims

The new claims introduce no new matter, and are fully supported by the application as originally filed.

New claim 21 combines claims 1 and 14. New claims 22-24 depend from claim 21, and simply repeat the limitations of claims 2-4 respectively. New claim 25 combines claims 5 and 14. New claims 26-28 depend from claim 25, and simply repeat the limitations of claims 6-8 respectively.

New claim 29 depends from claim 17, and adds the limitations of claim 2. New claim 30 depends from claim 17, and adds the limitations of claim 3. New claim 31 depends from claim 17, and adds the limitations of claim 4.

New claim 32 depends from claim 16, and adds the limitations of claim 6. New claim 33 depends from claim 16, and adds the limitations of claim 7. New claim 34 depends from claim 16, and adds the limitations of claim 8.

New claim 35 is an apparatus claim that is based upon method claim 1.

CONCLUSION

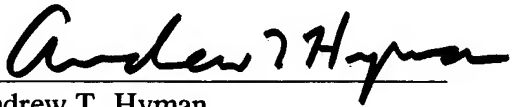
Applicant respectfully submits that the amended claims of the present application define patentable subject matter. Early passage of the pending claims to issue is earnestly solicited.

Applicant would appreciate if the Examiner would please contact Applicant's attorney by telephone, if that might help to speedily dispose of any unresolved issues pertaining to the present application.

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